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## A NEW AMERICAN HISTORICAL JOURNAL

The friends of a general historical journal like the *American Historical Review* might be excused if in its earliest years they devoted all their superfluous energies to making it as good and as successful as possible, and gave little thought to the problem or possibility of establishing other historical journals in the United States. But now that it is twenty-two or twenty-three years old, and, through whatever troubles of adolescence, has attained its majority, it is natural to consider with open mind the question, what would be the ideal set of organs through which American historical scholarship and American interest in history should express themselves.

The answer should be widely different from that which alone was possible in 1895. That there has been an enormous improvement in the quality of American historical scholarship since those days it would be unwise to affirm, though some improvement has no doubt taken place; but certainly the quantity of our historical output has greatly increased, and it is far more diversified. One through whose hands all important new American books of history then passed, on their way from publisher to reviewer, as similar volumes of the present day pass now, well remembers how often it happened—much oftener than it happens in these days—that after ardent thinking he was obliged to conclude, concerning some book on a quite special subject, that no one in America had qualified himself to review with authority a book in that particular field. Where perhaps some thirty different subjects for doctoral dissertations were being worked upon in 1895, four hundred are being investigated in the present academic year. Whole areas of human history, such as the history of the ancient world, to which American historical scholars were then giving almost no attention, are now being cultivated with ardor by groups of able and learned young men and women.

Meanwhile the wealth of the country, too, and the circle of cultivated readers, have grown with much rapidity. It can no longer be pretended that the country is too backward or too poor to sustain the most expensive undertakings of scholarship. It is abundantly able to support them in rich variety. Indeed, it must speedily awaken to the duty of doing so in much larger measure than heretofore. The resources out of which Europe has in the past sustained the enterprises of scholarship, whether through the hands of governments or of societies or of subscribers, have suffered losses of unparalleled magnitude through four years of the most extensive and destructive warfare ever known. All the apparatus of civilization will feel the disastrous effects for many years, and in particular it will be impossible for Europe to maintain the apparatus of scholarship on any such scale as hitherto. The United States is the richest of countries, and, in any probable event of the great war, will emerge from it far less damaged in resources than any of the nations of Europe. It will be her opportunity and her privilege to step into the breach, to do what one young nation can do to repair the losses, and to take upon herself the leading part, if not in performing the finest labors of scholarship, at least in their sustainment.

What then, in this present-day America of richer and more diversified historical studies, should be the ideal organization of such studies? Or, to consider only one modest subdivision of so large an inquiry, what arrangement would ideally meet her developing needs in respect to regular organs of publication? Individual books will be published in abundance through the usual channels of trade, with profit or loss, most likely the latter, to the author. But much good matter will always appear in the "transactions" or annual volumes of societies, and much in periodicals. The latter as a rule do more toward keeping interest in history or parts of history alive than can be done by volumes frequently or less regularly appearing. Their reviews of books and their pages of news encourage development by bringing constantly before the minds of readers and workers the higher sort of scholarly standards, the advances marked by recent publications, the evidence of professional solidarity, the "aid and comfort" which resides in the sense of not working alone.

The healthiest and most well-rounded development of historical science in the United States would require, first, the existence of one or more general historical journals of high quality; secondly, a multitude of local historical journals, cultivating restricted fields, but not provincial in quality; and thirdly, a considerable number of ably-conducted special journals, whose fields are restricted not by geographical boundaries but by concentration on particular portions or aspects of history.

Such in fact is, or was before the war, the status of Europe in respect to historical periodicals. Each of the more important countries had long had one or more general journals, among which the *Revue Historique* would commonly be rated as the best. Each country, but especially France and Germany, abounded in local or regional journals, most often conducted by men capable of looking outside the boundaries of the locality and of relating its history intelligently to the history of the nation or of the world. Such were or are the *Forschungen zur Brandenburgisch-Preussischen Geschichte*, the *Annales de Bretagne*, the *Archivio della Reale Società Romana di Storia Patria*. But there have also been many organs of special historical learning, often international in character and support, sometimes multilingual in contents, which formed media of communication between savants in various lands whose lives were devoted to individual periods or parts or phases of the field of history—*Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique*, *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, *Revue des Études Juives*, *Revue des Études Napoléoniennes*, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, *Archiv für Papyrusforschung*, *Ephemeris Epigraphica*, journals of military and naval and economic and legal history, of ancient history and the history of art or of commerce; their name is legion and their pages are a delight to the lover of learning.

In the first of these two directions America has already attained a more than merely respectable development. To the older journals like the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History* and the Virginia, South Carolina, and Maryland journals of similar name, the last few years have seen the addition of journals of excellent quality and much promise, for the history of Michigan, Wisconsin,

Minnesota, Tennessee, and Georgia. At least twenty states have good periodicals of this character, and there are a few excellent journals of regional history.

As for the other variety of historical journal which under normal growth of our science we should expect to appear, the journal neither local nor completely general but dedicated to a special historical field, signs are not wanting that the time is ripe for its emergence. Whether because a general journal, however catholic in intention, can give no very ample amount of space to any one specialty, or for whatever other reason connected with increasing interest and increasing production, the American votaries of particular cults in history have in several instances laid plans for the creation of special organs, and in some cases have called them into existence. In April, 1915, there appeared under the auspices of the Catholic University of America the first number of the *Catholic Historical Review*, an excellent journal, devoted to the history of the Catholic Church in America. It is conducted with much energy and intelligence, has contained many valuable and interesting articles, and has done much to stimulate the many local Catholic historical societies, and to create in them the sense of solidarity and the belief that they have an important mission to be fulfilled by common action. It were much to be desired that the Protestant churches, with their greatly superior wealth and resources, would do half as much for the ecclesiastical and religious history of the United States as is being done, through this journal and otherwise, by the American Catholics. In January, 1916, appeared the first numbers of two other historical quarterlies, representing two widely different specialties, the *Military Historian and Economist* and the *Journal of Negro History*, both of which have since led prosperous careers and have greatly increased the interest of students in two highly important fields of historical inquiry.

Several other fields might be named in which America could probably sustain, or in a few years will be able to sustain, a special historical journal. It ought to be possible before long to maintain a journal of legal history, perhaps of economic history. Still nearer at hand may such a result be in the case of ancient

history. That is a specialty which has of late advanced rapidly in the United States. How it can continue to do so in a Greekless land, apparently soon to become also a Latinless land, is a mystery; but the attraction of the subject for the American mind, and especially of the history of the Roman Empire, with its social problems so like our own, has been abundantly and increasingly manifest in recent years.

But of all the departments of history that America might conceivably furnish with a special historical periodical, there is none that has made greater advances in recent years, none that is now in a course of more rapid development, than that which the HISPANIC AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW has taken for its province. So at least it appears to one whose duty requires him to take passing note, if no more, of all the historical volumes and monographs and articles that the country produces. If such a one looks back ten years, he is astonished at the development which this variety of historical work has attained among us, at the number of competent and active workers who in that brief period have come forward. When it is remembered that more than a third of the area of the United States was once under the dominion of Spain, and that the rest has during three centuries had large relations with Spanish and Portuguese America, it seems fairly obvious that Hispanic American history should be largely cultivated among us, and that many able young scholars should arise to devote themselves zealously to it; but such a thought was not widely entertained ten years ago. How much has been contributed toward this result by the efforts of particular institutions, such as the universities of California and Texas, by the work of individual teachers like those who have been made advisory editors of this journal, or by the hospitable aid and kindly encouragement afforded to young students from our country by eminent historical scholars of Spain, of Portugal, and of Hispanic America, this is not the place to enquire. It suffices to rejoice in the growth and expansion noted, to applaud the impulse, nowise too ambitious, which has led to the foundation of this REVIEW, to wish it all success, to expect for it the unselfish aid of all who are strongly interested in its special field, and to

promise, on behalf of those to whose interest that field is less central, the hearty co-operation that so loyal a fraternity as the body of American historical scholars is sure to afford.

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